

## INVESTIGATING THIRD LANGUAGE ACQUISITION OF EFL'S LEARNERS THROUGH HUMOR INSTAGRAM VIDEOS

**Fabio Bernarivo Wiyogo**

English Literature, Faculty of Languages and Arts Universitas Negeri Surabaya

e-mail: [Fabio.18064@mhs.unesa.ac.id](mailto:Fabio.18064@mhs.unesa.ac.id)

### Abstrak

Pemerolehan bahasa memiliki banyak cara untuk didekati, tetapi dalam penelitian ini, penulis ingin tahu tentang bagaimana akuisisi L3 (atau akuisisi bahasa ketiga) dapat dipengaruhi melalui humor yang awalnya tidak berasal dari bahasa pertama / bahasa ibu. Sebuah studi sebelumnya telah dilakukan oleh (Vaid & Lopez, 2017) untuk menjelaskan bagaimana pendekatan psikolinguistik terhadap humor dan bagaimana manusia memahami humor. Jurnal menyimpulkan dengan keyakinan bahwa jika para peneliti meneliti interaksi konten humor, konteks sosial dan linguistik di mana pertukaran humor akan mengarah pada wawasan teoritis yang kaya serta memberikan perspektif unik tentang aspek humor yang kurang dipelajari. Penelitian ini terutama memiliki pelajar L3 bahasa Inggris sebagai pengumpulan data primer dan analisis untuk penelitian ini didasarkan pada tanggapan dari peserta yang telah melihat video humor yang disajikan kepada mereka. Penelitian ini menampilkan interpretivisme untuk memahami pelajar bahasa Inggris L3, empati sangat penting untuk menanyakan sudut pandang subjek, dan sampai batas tertentu, menafsirkan interaksi antara subjek dan objek penelitian itu sendiri. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa persepsi yang terstruktur adalah persepsi yang digunakan untuk mendekonstruksi humor video Instagram yang terdiri dari struktur bentuk, kedua adalah struktur situasional, dan ketiga adalah struktur intensional. Adapun bagaimana pelajar L3 memahami video Instagram humor, ada empat jenis pemahaman bahasa yang hadir dalam memahami video yang disajikan, yaitu pengenalan kata yang diucapkan, pengenalan kata cetak, leksikon mental, dan pemahaman kalimat dan wacana. Peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa dengan melihat video Instagram humor, pelajar L3 dapat meningkatkan bahasa Inggris mereka karena memahami video yang relevan akan membutuhkan kemampuan kognitif umum untuk dapat membuat kesimpulan dari video tertentu dalam bahasa yang berbeda, pelajar L3 melakukan ini secara teratur sebagai bagian dari kehidupan sehari-hari mereka; oleh karena itu, meningkatkan kemungkinan mengembangkan bahasa Inggris yang lebih baik.

**Kata kunci:** Persepsi dan Bahasa, Pemerolehan Bahasa, Humor, Bahasa ketiga

### Abstract

The acquisition of languages has many ways to be approached, but in this study, the author is curious about how the acquisition of L3 (or third language acquisition) can be affected through humor that originally did not come from his or her native language/mother tongue. A previous study has been done by (Vaid & Lopez, 2017) in order to shed a light on how psycholinguistic approaches to humor and how humans comprehend humor. The journal concluded with the belief that if the researchers examine the interaction of humor content, the social and linguistic context in which humor is exchanged will lead to rich theoretical insights as well as provide a unique perspective on less-studied aspects of humor. This research mainly had English L3 learners as primary data collection and the analysis for this research was based on the responses from the participants that had already seen the humor videos presented to them. This research features interpretivism in order to understand English L3 learners, empathy in crucial for inquiring the subjects' point of view, and to an extent, interpreting the interaction between the subject and the object of the research itself. This research conclude that structured perception is the perception used to deconstruct humor Instagram videos which consists of form structure, second is situational structure, and the third is the intension structure. As for how L3 learners comprehend humor Instagram videos, there are four kinds of language comprehension that were present in understanding the presented videos, which are spoken word recognition, printed word recognition, mental lexicon, and comprehension of sentences and discourse. Researcher postulates that by looking at humor Instagram videos, L3 learners are able to improve their English because comprehending relevant videos would require a general cognitive ability to be able to make an inference of certain videos in different languages, L3 learners does this in regular basis as a part of their daily lives; therefore, increasing the likelihood of developing a better English.

**Keywords:** Language perception, acquisition, humor, L3

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There are several questions that this research would like to address, the prominent research question would be, what are L3 learner perception towards humor Instagram videos? In order to find out about this particular subject, we need to know what exactly is L3. According to Bardel, it is an acquisition of a language when the learner already learned L2 and that L2 has already been acquired after the acquisition of L1 (Bardel & Falk, 2020). This acquisition should not be confused with learned language since both approaches differ from one and another. Language acquisition primarily discuss passive or unconscious learning in language while learned language discusses active and conscious learning in language. Since the main focus of this research is the perspective of L3, we have to understand the meaning of perception. Perception is the ability to understand and notice things that are not obvious to other people. Language and perception are two concepts that cannot be separated, (Erna, 2018) states that because of language, one's perception can change. Language Perception is a prominent concept that concerns for speech perception, observation, and understanding whilst related to speech production and language development (Zhou, 2018).

The perspective of L3 through the scope of psycholinguistic is certainly a challenge of its own, to understand this, a definition of psycholinguistics has to be made. Psycholinguistics is a branch of cognitive psychology concerned with how human language is acquired, processed, planned, and represented in the mind and brain (García-mayo, 2012). A previous study has been done by (Vaid & Lopez, 2017) in order to shed a light on how psycholinguistic approaches to humor and how humans comprehend humor. The journal concluded with the belief that if the researchers examine the interaction of humor content, the social and linguistic context in which humor is exchanged will lead to rich theoretical insights as well as provide a unique perspective on less-studied aspects of humor.

Another previous study done by Azhar (Ibrahim, 2020), talked about a stand-up comedy that deals with audience perception and cognitive which on. By looking at the Idealized Cognitive Model (ICM), Azhar was able to understand the complexity of Mosidik's stand-up comedy jokes and that most of the jokes contain ICM. Azhar believed that the ICM in the jokes are complex and were able to give the audience a vivid image but at the same time could create confusion. Since ICM is frequently used as a setup, the audience could make an inference from the reference that the author used. By utilizing these, Azhar found that Mosidik was able to create a clear and vivid world, fitting to the author's desired outcome. By analyzing from the perspective of L3, this study will enrich and assist the ever-changing study of language and acquisition. There is a practical

significance to this study. This study would assist the individual who wanted to improve language acquisition through the use of humor content while having a better understanding of the context needed to develop the language capabilities.

In humor transfer, culture plays a major role when translating humorous content and that the translator has to be able to convey the joke in a different audience. As the translator, we know jokes cannot be translated the same way as our usual types of translation, this is especially true for Vandaele (Vandaele, 2002). There are 4 elements in dealing with failed humor translation: Humor, Comprehension, Appreciation, Rhetorical effect. Language comprehension is something that we, human beings, do unconsciously in our daily lives. There are several kinds of language comprehension that make up for this study based from (Treiman, 2003); namely spoken word recognition, printed word recognition, mental lexicon, and comprehension of sentences and discourse. Language perception is the process of recognizing the intended meaning that were uttered by written or spoken way (Wiley, 1958).

There are three levels of structure that composed this scheme, the first one is form structure, second is situational structure, and the third is the intension structure. Language production is the process of meaning creation and expression, be it written or spoken, it is both physical and abstract (Marzona & Ekasakti, 2019). Theoretical research by Iverson (Cabrelli, A. & Iverson, 2013) has highlighted the importance of third language acquisition or L3 in short. The third acquisition of a language is when the learner already learned L2 (second language acquisition) and that L2 have already been acquired after the acquisition of L1 (first language acquisition). Research by (Hussain, 2017) mentioned that language acquisition has some important differences to its counterpart; language learning. Language acquisition is an intuitive process of obtaining a linguistic knowledge without exertion. It heavily emphasizes the communication aspect of language whilst not paying much attention to grammatical and syntactical structure. Humor, according to the article of (Wyer & Collins, 1992), postulates that there exists a certain psychological state which tends to produce laughter, which is the natural phenomenon or process we will refer to as humor or humor perception. The level of laughter that humor could produce tends to be different for every person, this is because each people perceive things that are funny the way each of them interprets themselves.

## METHOD

This research mainly had English L3 learners as primary data collection because the amount of people

learning English through informal education is immense as online classes are still mandatory for the majority of campus. The analysis for this research was based on the responses from the participants that had already seen the humor videos presented to them, an insight of how they could understand the joke and their takes on the videos. Hence, the research adopted the approach by using a qualitative approach. According to (Bolderston et al., 2018), qualitative research is an interpretative approach, which attempts to gain insight into the specific meanings and behaviors experienced in a certain social phenomenon through the subjective experiences of the participants.

There are several types of qualitative research, though, this research features interpretivism in order to understand English L3 learners. With this type of qualitative approach, empathy is crucial for inquiring the subjects' point of view, and to an extent, interpreting the interaction between the subject and the object of the research itself. The respondents for this research were L3 individuals that have their English as the third language and still currently learning English be it actively or passively. Since the videos that were shown to the participants coming from Instagram humor videos, the participants are expected to have sufficient knowledge of the internet and viral funny videos. This study focused on the participants' experience when reacting to the humor content through their own personal perspectives. The setting of the study was in social media platforms, in this case, Instagram as the media for collecting humor videos and Line/Zoom as media to interview the participants. Online communication is preferred because as of the present time, a pandemic went on and physical distancing were expected for the residents of each of our local government. The source of data for this study will be a non-statistical data analysis which includes breaking down relevant theories with language perception as the key factor, and interpreting the collected data as supportive evidence for the study. The collected data are humor content which includes images, words, phrases, or sentences related to the humor itself and the response of the participants after they saw the humor videos and answer several questions in written form. This study will use the technique of interview to collect data from the participants. This is because the study needs an in-depth response from the respondents and would like the participants to describe the experience and thoughts behind the humor contents provided by the researcher. Instagram was a prominent role in this research as videos collected mentioned in the interview were collected there. Characteristics for the videos were humorous videos with elements of puns, irony, double entendres and such. The instrument of the study will be the researcher himself, the interview itself will be done through online communication services such as Zoom and Line. Hence, tools to provide help for the researcher are smartphones and

social media applications, and Line. Guidelines are necessary for interviews because it gave a clear direction for the researcher to make an analysis for the research. Here were the guidelines used for this research:

1. Ask participants background in English
2. How daily the use of English
3. How willing participants learn English
4. Are participants familiar with humors in English?
5. How often participants encounter a joke in English?
6. Can you explain the joke in video 1? Elaborate
7. Can you explain the joke in video 2? Elaborate
8. Can you explain the joke in video 3? Elaborate
9. What can you take from watching the video above that may help you understand English more?

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to understand the kind of perception of L3 in humor Instagram videos, we must base on both the interview and the questionnaire, the researcher concludes that the kinds of perception that were used in L3 when watching humor Instagram videos are the ones that structured. First, from Mr. Kevin's side, when researched asked him on what his thoughts on all the video 1, he focused his attention to the written captions and trying to understand the meaning of it. As the sentence "...watching the rock-paper-scissor simulator season finale" left him confused, he then focuses his attention to the video presented to him to then only left with more questions since he only sees a group of rocks, papers, and scissors bumping one another until only one of them left. This is also true in Mr. Mikael's perspective, with the exception that Mr. Mikael focuses on the fact that he could not come just because of something trivial like "watching the rock-paper-scissor simulator season finale". The common theme they both have is the way they start looking at the written captions.

The first level of language perception revolves around sound form and meaning form. The caption is coherent by in itself, and the interviewee understood the meaning from the simple sentence; however, based on their experience, it doesn't make any sense.

This is where the second level of language perception came. They both realizes that sometimes, you just can't attend certain hang out or event when there are more important things had to be done, and from what they experienced, watching rock-paper-scissor simulator season finale is not or may not be as important to them. after watching the video, they realize the intention of the video.

The third level, intention structure tackles the underlying message that the video doesn't explicitly point out. They notice the humor behind the video

after analyzing the context and saw the reason behind the excuse that previously seen as normal, was not normal to the extent that Mr. Mikael called it “trivial”.

This proves that the way they perceive English language is structured and there are stages behind the perception used by the interviewees. As in video 2, both of the participant focuses on the conversation between the supposed Isaac Newton and his friend. They were able to understand from the conversation that the Isaac Newton in the video only loves women that is big in body size, but his friend believes he could not put it in his manifesto, so Isaac Newton rearranges his words to the quote that we all know now as “The Greater the Mass, The Greater the Force of Attraction”. The only difference between video one and video two is that in video two, the humor presented in a conversational level where the only context of the video is the manifesto of Isaac Newton. Surprisingly, both interviewees have similar responses with the video and with the same perception. The 3<sup>rd</sup> video is much longer as it has 2 different scenes where the doctor utilizes wordplays and contradiction in morpheme levels. Even though its longer, both interviewees with their L3 are able to follow the joke since they found the video to be the funniest if the three presented ones.

Perception with third language is often a challenge to its own, by utilizing the previous learned language and native language interviewees were able to deconstruct the humor video and breaking them down in a structured way unconsciously. With the help of Bahasa Indonesia and Javanese having a similar grammatical order and syntactical structure they were able to transfer the humor and understand it.

## CONCLUSION

After thorough analysis of the research, this research conclude that structured perception is the perception used to deconstruct humor Instagram videos which consists of form structure, second is situational structure, and the third is the intension structure. As for how L3 learners comprehend humor Instagram videos, there are four kinds of language comprehension that were present in understanding the presented videos, which are spoken word recognition, printed word recognition, mental lexicon, and comprehension of sentences and discourse. Researcher postulates that by looking at humor Instagram videos, L3 learners are able to improve their English because comprehending relevant videos would require a general cognitive ability to be able to make an inference of certain videos in different languages, L3 learners does this in regular basis as a part of their daily lives; therefore, increasing the likelihood of developing a better English.

## REFERENCE

- Bardel, C., & Falk, Y. (2020). L1, L2 and L3: Same or different? *Second Language Research*, 1–6.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0267658320941033>
- Bolderston, A., Program, R. M., & Hospital, P. M. (2018). A Brief Introduction to Qualitative Research. 5930(March 2006).  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0820-5930\(09\)60112-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0820-5930(09)60112-2)
- Cabrelli, A. & Iverson, M. (2013). Third language acquisition. *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism*, 3(1), 73–93.  
<https://doi.org/10.1075/lab.3.1.04jae>
- Charles, T. J., & Trenkic, D. (2015). Speech segmentation in a second language: The role of bi-modal input. *Subtitles and Language Learning: Principles, Strategies, and Practical Experiences*, 44(January 2015), 173–198.
- Dull, E., & Reinhardt, S. P. (2014). An analytic approach for discovery. In *CEUR Workshop Proceedings* (Vol. 1304, pp. 89–92).
- Erna, Dwinata. (2018). Language and Perception. *Mimesis in a Cognitive Perspecyive*, 1(1), 11–20.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315124520-2>
- García-mayo, M. D. E. L. P. (2012). *Cognitive\_approaches\_to\_L3\_acq.PDF*. *International Journal of English Studies*, 12(1), 129–146.
- Health, C. (1935). mechanisms of language. 25–27.
- Hussain, I. (2017). Distinction Between Language Acquisition and Language Learning: A Comparative Study. *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics*, 39(0), 1–5.
- Ibrahim, A. S. (2020). Idealized Cognitive Models on Mosidik’s Stand-up Comedy Utterances. 2507(February), 1–9.
- MARTIN, R. A. (2007). Introduction to the Psychology of Humor. *The Psychology of Humor*, 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-012372564-6/50020-4>
- Marzi, C., & Pirrelli, V. (2012). Understanding the architecture of the mental lexicon. *Lingue e Linguaggio*, 11(2), 101–105.  
<https://doi.org/10.1418/38780>
- Marzona, Y., & Ekasakti, U. (2019). Spoken Language Production: A Psycholinguistic Approach *International Conference on Global Education V “ Global Education , Common Wealth , and Cultural Diversity .”* July.  
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2617228>
- Mcdonald, S. M. (2011). *PerceptionConceptAnalysis*.

- Scovel, T. (1998). Thomas\_Scovel\_Psycholinguistics\_Oxford\_I.pdf (p. 74).
- Taft, M. (2017). Exploring the Cohort Model of spoken word recognition. 0277(October). [https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0277\(86\)90017-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0277(86)90017-X)
- Tisgam, K. H. (n.d.). Translating Cultural Humour: Theory and Practice.
- Toassi, P. (2021). Crosslinguistic influence in the production of English as L3. April. <https://doi.org/10.26512/rhla.v20i1.32893>
- Tordini, O. (2020). Progressive and regressive transfer in third language acquisition and development: an up-to-date review. *Lingue e Linguaggi*, 39(2020), 339–359. <https://doi.org/10.1285/i22390359v39p339>
- Treiman, R. (2003). Comprehensive handbook of psychology, Vol. 4: Experimental Psychology . 4, 527–548.
- Vaid & Lopez. (2017). Lopez and Vaid 2017 Psycholinguistic approaches to humor.pdf.
- Van Orden, G. C. (1987). A ROWS is a ROSE. *Memory & Cognition*, 15(3), 181–198.
- Vandaele, J. (2002). Introduction. *The Translator*, 8(2), 149–172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2002.10799130>
- Westergaard, M. (2021). L3 acquisition and crosslinguistic influence as co-activation: Response to commentaries on the keynote ‘Microvariation in multilingual situations: The importance of property-by-property acquisition.’ *Second Language Research*, 37(3), 501–518. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02676583211007897>
- Wiley, J. (1958). Studies in the Perception of Heaviness. II. *Nordisk Psykologi*, 10(2), 65–86. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00291463.1958.10780370>
- Wyer, R. S., & Collins, J. E. (1992). A theory of humor elicitation. *Psychological Review*, 99(4), 663–688. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.99.4.663>
- Zhou, J. (2018). The Macroscopic Analysis of Language Perception. December. <https://doi.org/10.2991/icadce-18.2018.36>